

THE ABORIGINAL TRIBES OF CHINA

Paper read by Dr. E. C. Machle before Canton Missionary Conference, Nov. 29, 1911.

In an old Chinese book, "The Daily Record of Fragmentary News," is a legend which gives a Chinese explanation of the origin of the aboriginal tribes of China, and five out of ten Chinese will tell you they are of canine descent, and are born with tails!

But the question has often been seriously asked, "From whence did the ancestors of these tribes really come?" From out the mists of the far-distant past come traditions and romances, but nothing definite enough to lead us beyond speculation and conjecture regarding them. Several authorities agree that they probably came through Burmah and Siam from the west, and the similarity in the languages lends colour to the opinion; but Rev. W. C. Dodd, who has made an extensive study of the subject, asserts with as much reason that the tribes in Burmah and Siam came originally from China, and are the younger brothers of those in Kwei Chow and Kwong Sai to-day. Be that as it may, the fact remains that when the people now known as Chinese reached the regions of Shansi and Shensi in North China, some twenty-three centuries B. C., they found other tribes in occupation who had migrated to the East earlier than they. Those aborigines struggled hard and long to keep their country and maintain their independence, but gradually they were driven back further and still further, till finally they established themselves in the high recesses and mountain fastnesses of the Southwest.

Comparatively little is known about these non-Chinese races, which today are scattered more or less plentifully through the provinces of Kwei Chow, Sz-chuen, Yunnan, Kwong Sai, Hunan, the Northwest of Kwong Tung, Hainan Island, and in North Siam, Tonking, and the French Laos States. In Kwei Chow they appear to be scattered all over the province, and the same may be said of Yunnan, where about two-thirds of the inhabitants consist of various tribes of Lolo, Lin-su, Mu-su Man-tsz, and Miao-tsz. In Kwong Sai they are located principally in the northeast of the province, and in Kwong Tung in the northwest. It has not yet been possible to get a reliable estimate of their numbers, but travellers assure us there must be several millions. One Chinese historian speaks of them again and again as the "one hundred and eighty tribes," but so large a number cannot be accounted for at the present day. It may be that some of the clans have been wiped out during the rebellions

which have arisen at different times, or have been absorbed by the Chinese. Mr. F. S. A. Bourne, of the British Consular Service, while travelling in Sz-chuen, passed a sandy bluff on which were pointed out to him about twenty caves which in times past had been the homes of Man-tsz (the term used by Chinese for savages in general). Most of the entrances, three to four feet square, were cut in the vertical cliff some ten feet from the ground, so that they could not be reached except by ladder. The face of the cliff around the doors was adorned by sculpture in relief, the most striking being a round human face. Baber, another traveller, also of Consular Service, mentions having seen similar caves in South Sz-chuen, called by the same name "caves of the Man-tsz." The valleys had apparently been the headquarters of a tribe in by-gone days, for, some miles further down, the site of the castle of a Man-tsz chief was pointed out; but of the castle not one stone remains upon another, though the sculptured blocks lying around bore witness to a considerable advance in civilization. This tribe had apparently become extinct, as may have been the fate of other smaller tribes. The majority of those which remain seem to consist of a strong, sturdy, independent people,—“a marvellous people, who have maintained a kind of empire of their own inside the Chinese Empire since the days of Yao and Shuen, holding their own against the Chinese, and are reported even to have in some parts thousands of the latter as slaves in their inaccessible strongholds, thus retaliating on the Chinese, who centuries ago exposed them to the same treatment.” This is said to be especially true of the tribes living in Kwei Chow, called the Miao-tsz. Most travellers in Western China have found something to say about these interesting people, but reliable information regarding them is difficult to obtain, partly because of their isolation from the Chinese, whose contempt for them, though well-returned, tends to make them reserved and suspicious, and partly because of their different language, and their maintenance of “home rule.” Consequently we are dependent for definite knowledge on the few travellers who have had time to get to know and classify the scattered tribes, and on the missionaries who have in the last few years come in contact with them.

Messrs. Parker and Hosie have shown that the Miao-tsz tribes all speak dialects of one language, while Bourne by the use of short vocabularies was able in many cases to identify Lolos, and to distinguish them from Miao-tsz and Shans. The Miao, in locality, appear to be the most easterly, and in language perhaps most resemble the Chinese. Mr. T. L. Bullock, in an article read before

the Pekin Oriental Society in March, 1887, says, "The Miao-tsz are wild, hardy mountaineers, who spend their time in hunting and wood-cutting, while their women cultivate the plots of land which supply them with grain. Their villages, which are strongly fortified, are perched on the most precipitous cliffs, surrounded by wood, and approached only by steep, and narrow paths."

The three great distinctive and best known tribes at the present day are these Miao-tsz, of Kwei Chow; the Lolos, the Highlanders of China, whose headquarters are in the southeastern part of Sz-chuen, and who assert their independence in no uncertain manner; and the Shans, who are most numerous in Yunnan Province, and the Indo-China States to the south. In the southwest of Sz-chuen are the Si-fans, who have intermarried with the Tibetans, and some smaller tribes of whom little is known, save that they are wild and savage.

It is remarkable that though these aboriginal tribes mix somewhat with the Chinese in market and business, they adhere generally, to their own primitive religion and language, as well as to their own style of dress. "These excellent Shans," says Mr. Bourne in his diary, "were troubled in mind by a Proclamation issued by Governor-General Ts'en ordering them, or rather their women-folk, to adopt Chinese dress. They were of the opinion, they said, that every one should be allowed to follow his own religion, and theirs was that women should dress in tunics and skirts, and not in sacks and trousers!"

Archibald Colquhoun, in his book "Across Chrysi," speaking of the non-Chinese people in South Kwong Sai says, "In addition to, and quite apart from the Miao-tsz who are found in the northwest of this province, there are said to be twenty-four Chau districts (that is, districts under a town of the third order) occupied by these partially subdued tribes throughout Kwong Sai. The names of their chiefs are given in the Chinese 'Red Book,' and their position is marked, though inaccurately, on the Chinese statistical maps, but no information of any value is given regarding the customs, language, or numbers of these tribes. Those who inhabit the very mountainous territory near Na-tei Chau, on the north of the West River, are unsubdued, and are called 'Shang Miao-tsz.' They are divided into Shang Miao and Shuk Miao—'raw' and 'ripe,' 'subdued' and 'unsubdued.' Of the subdued tribes, there are a dozen or so in the extreme western corner of Kwong Sai, and of these, several are situated not remote from the river." Along the sides of this water-way (West River) many of the inhabitants are of pure Kwong Tung origin, especially the traders; but in many cases these people have intermarried with the aboriginal people. The

consequence is a mixed race, which has adopted the dress, manners, and, so far as they could, the language of the Cantonese.

The tribes in Northwest Kwong Tung, called the Ius, will be referred to again. Like the other tribes, and for the same reason of self-protection and safety, they have built their strongholds in the rough mountain country and remote places, where the Chinese dare not follow, and the foreigner is forbidden to go. Rev. B. C. Henry, in his most interesting book, "Ling Nam," gives a short concise description of them and their customs.

Different reasons are given for the presence of the Miao-tsz in the Island of Hainan, but at best they are only conjectures. That they are a different people from the real Hainanese aborigines is patent to all who meet the two peoples and observe customs, speech and physiognomy. In his paper on "Hainan" in the "China Review," June 1874, E. C. Bowra says "The Chinese sovereigns, in order to ward off the attacks of the wild Hainanese aborigines, deported to Hainan successive detachments of mountaineers from the mountainous districts of Kwong Sai, Kwei Chow, etc. (probably captured rebels) who, being settled between the coast (where the Chinese colonists lived) and the mountains, (where the wild Hainanese lived) were to serve as a protection to the Chinese colonies; but they soon increased so in numbers, and fraternized so much with the Hainanese, that they formed a new source of danger." Mr. Henry, who travelled among them somewhat while in Hainan, also advances this theory. F. P. Gilman, of the American Presbyterian Mission, has also taken considerable interest in them during his residence in Hainan. In an article in the "China Review," 1891, he says, "Forty miles from the west coast of Hainan, among the foothills of the mountains, and between the Chinese settlers and the natives of the interior, are many villages of the Miao-tsz, or Miao-Loi. They state that they came originally from the mainland near Ko-Chow, four or five generations ago, and have settled in the island not more than 200 years. They have retained in a great measure their original language, manners, and customs. They live in villages of from ten to thirty families, and there are perhaps not more than four or five thousand in Hainan. They are spoken of by their Chinese neighbours as peaceable and industrious. In their religion they have preserved their traditions, and there are neither idols nor ancestral tablets found in their homes."

C. C. Jeremiassen and E. H. Parker have also studied the Loi somewhat and investigated their language, and both agree that the

Loi are related to the Siamese or Annamese, and originally have belonged to Siam or Western Annam.

Many of the non-Chinese tribes in China are brave and warlike people, who answer swiftly to the call to battle, though even the Chinese historians admit they have generally been peaceful till stirred to violence by the avarice of officials or soldiers, or by refugee outlaws. The Chinese have found by sad experience that it has been much easier to raise a disturbance among the clans than to quell it. The "China Review" of June 1888, has an interesting article by E. H. Parker on the "Rebellions of the Petty Independent Tribes of China," on which only slight notes can be made in this paper. The first one dealt with was Woo San Kwei's rebellion over 200 years ago, when the tribes were numerous and more rich in territory, and the power of the Emperor was not great in the South. By the help of friendly Lolos, the Chinese Army succeeded in quelling the disturbance, but an injustice on the part of those in authority turned even their Lolo helpers against them, and once more set the clans in the three provinces, Kwei Chow, Yunnan and Kwong Sai in a flame of revolt. At last this also was suppressed, but "the victory seems to have been owing entirely to artillery, as the tribes had nothing but javelins and crossbows wherewith to support their bravery." They fled for refuge to the dark jungles of Kwei Chow, where they were remorselessly surrounded and driven to bay. Tribe was set against tribe, under promise of forgiveness and reward; civilized against uncivilized, under promise of amnesty. Conflicting accounts give the number of slain at from 10,000 to 400,000. When the "unripe" tribes had been thus punished, the civilized or "ripe" ones, instead of the promised forgiveness, were called to book for having joined their countrymen, and 17,000 were beheaded, 25,000 made prisoners, and 1200 of their 'pahs' destroyed, against 400 spared. Half the prisoners were afterwards pardoned, and half of their estates returned to them. This was the first thorough quelling of the "barbarians of the Southwest." In 1740 there was a revolt among the Ius on the borders of Hunan and Kwong Sai which was speedily suppressed, and in which the poor savages again lost in numbers, land, authority and power. From 1749 to 1776 the Manchus were busy dealing with the tribes in Sz'chuen, whose leaders, driven to extremities, finally surrendered. In 1791 a dispute arose about some stolen cattle, and the Miao-tsz again took to the warpath. The Viceroys of the three surrounding provinces were commanded to exterminate them, and a drivelling, though none the less expensive warfare was waged for several years, till the sensible

counsels of a border official prevailed, and, it being represented to the Emperor that the trouble all began through an unjust trespass on the part of the Chinese, the army was withdrawn and the Miaotsz were ingloriously and tacitly left in possession of their ancestral domains. The next rebellion recorded was that in 1831, when the Ius, a blunt, uncompromising tribe on the borders of Hunan and Kwong Tung, rebelled because of frauds practiced on them by the Chinese. They fought fiercely, but were no match for the Chinese troops, and men, women and children were slain in hundreds. But no sooner was that insurrection crushed than another broke out among the Ius at Lien Chow, and another in Kwong Sai, both of which were of but short duration. But the injustice of the Manchus was to bring its own reward, for after the tribes had settled down to quiet life again, two high officials arrived from Peking with orders to exterminate the Paat P'ai Iu tribe of Lien Chow. Even the resident Chinese officers objected to such strong measures, but the desire for Imperial rewards prevailed over juster considerations. Eight Iu chiefs came frankly out to welcome the Chinese army, and offered to surrender the leaders of the last insurrection. The dastardly officials ordered the immediate decapitation of the eight spokesmen, and reported a huge victory to Peking! On this the whole Iu clan flew to arms once more, and with such effect that the Chinese army was defeated with immense loss. The Viceroy reported to Peking that an accidental explosion of his magazine had caused this loss, while Manchu officials reported victory after victory, and said the delay was caused by their not yet having captured the true ringleader! Meanwhile they were trying to "talk peace" with the Iu, but the Iu, fearing treachery, would not come out of their mountain retreats, while the Chinese, fearing the loss of their heads, dared not go into them. Finally, by means of liberal presents, they induced a few hundreds of the independent Ius to give in their nominal surrender in exchange for dollars, salt and cloth, and also to surrender three of the original ringleaders, as at first promised. Some of the tribes were also involved in the Mohammedan Rebellion, but as that and the Taai Peng Rebellion concerned them only indirectly, we need not dwell on them. Other small rebellions there have been in later years, but though the Chinese have surrounded their territory with soldiers and guard-stations, they have never been able entirely to dislodge these mountaineers from their desolate fastnesses, or to rule in their villages. I have been asked in speaking of the Ius, to relate an experience of my own among them near Lien Chow. Pardon me for speaking of myself. The

Ius consist at present of eight tribes, living in security among the great mountains near,—the Foh Shiu P'ai, the Kwan Lin P'ai, and the Ma Tsin P'ai being the tribes nearest Sam Kong. Every market day they come down from their mountain homes to barter tea, corn, millet, herbs, wood and chickens for cloth, tobacco, wine, and crockery. The women are clothed in short shaams of blue cloth embroidered in several colours and folded over the bosom, leaving a triangular opening at the neck; trousers to the knees, below which are seen strips of blue cloth richly embroidered in colours and wound spirally from ankles to knees. No shoes or stockings are worn, but the feet are hardened in babyhood by searing. Upon the neck and inserted in the ears are loops of silver wire. The hair is done up in a roll or knot on top of the head, and upon this roll is worn a close-fitting turban, round at the bottom, but covered on the crown only with a triangular piece of blue or red cloth; the blue cloth signifying the wearer is a wife; the red, a grandmother. The unmarried women are distinguished by a coil of white pith around the knot of hair.

The men have beards, wear trousers, embroidered jackets and instead of hats have their large knot of hair adorned with the tail feathers of the pheasant or rooster. Young men coming of age wear a white cock's feather in their hair.

The Ius told me that their general name everywhere is Lei, and that they came from Kwong Sai hundreds of years ago and settled in valleys between the mountains, and gradually grew in numbers to the eight tribes. The general name "Lei" suggests the name "Loi" of Hainan and "Lao" of Siam. I was told by a young Chinese named Liu that a relative of his in the time of Emperor Shiu Hing was an official in Kwong Sai, and that he employed eight Ius as chair bearers to carry him to his native town of Ho Ch'uen, near Lien Chow City. These increased to the eight tribes, and this young man, my informant, in accordance with the custom of his fathers, is very friendly with the Ius, and visits them every year.

The Ius who came to market soon began to appreciate the dispensary and hospital; but the Chinese officials forbade their entering the hospital, lest they come in too great numbers and attempt to take the city by scaling the *city walls*! The law forbids any Iu to go through the city; all business must be done outside.

The Ius became very friendly in time, and invited the doctor to visit them; so one day, with the Hospital preacher and a coolie I started from Sam Kong for the Iu country. After ascending half-way up the mountain-side the road is level all the way to Lien

Shan, 45 lei away, and runs through a mountainous country with magnificent scenery of forests, babbling streams, gorges, and terraced rice-fields. Lien Shan is the official guard station, well garrisoned with soldiers to keep the warlike Ius in check. Here foreigners are expected to show their passports to the officials that they may be escorted by the highway through the Iu country and not permitted to enter Iu settlements. We decided *not* to show our passports, knowing that soldiers would be simply a hindrance in our case.

When three miles beyond the City, about 4 p.m., the preacher decided that it would be better to let the official see the passport, so while he was on his way back to Lien Shan, I entered an empty Iu house occupied only during planting and harvest time. Shortly afterwards, some Ius came in. I offered them some of my food, and we were soon friends. I told them I was bound for the Iu City on top of the mountain, and they offered to escort me up; so off we went, up the road which narrowed as it wound steeply up the mountain. After an hour's climbing, we came to a settlement, whose young braves discussed my coming with the three older Ius who were with me. The younger ones seemed displeased, and wished me to tarry, so, as night was coming on, I agreed to stop over night at this settlement half-way up the mountain. Just then the preacher arrived, greatly agitated, saying that some soldiers from Lien Shan were coming, and as it was so late we had better abide where we were for the night. Among the several tens of huts was a large, one-roomed place, built specially for the accommodation of belated Ius, and in there we ensconced ourselves for the night. In the centre of the earthen floor was the fireplace, and around it, about 8 ft. away, forming a quadrangle, were large logs, on which we sat, with about twenty Ius for company. At 10 o'clock we heard voices asking in Chinese for "Ma I Shang," and five soldiers entered, with guns and lanterns, who were apparently relieved when they saw me. I tried to borrow a lantern from them, but they said they must hurry to Lien Shan at once to report where I was, and after learning that I intended to go up the mountain early in the morning, they hurried off. In the morning we started up the narrow, steep, rocky road which was just wide enough for two persons. After climbing some time the preacher and I stopped to rest and wait for the coolie. Upon asking why our coolie was taking so long to come, I was told by the preacher, who left the settlement after I did, that soldiers had arrived there and were detaining him. I sent the preacher back to command his release, but as time went on and neither appeared, I went on

alone. Soon I was met by some young braves who asked me to tarry a while, as the elders were preparing for my reception. But time went on, till my suspicions were aroused, and while they were passing around my pith hat for examination and were deep in a discussion over it, I ran on up the road, and they after me. But soon I was out of breath, and we had a good laugh all round. Then I showed them my umbrella which opened with a spring, and while they examined that, on I ran again, only to be seized once more. I struggled on with two young braves hanging to my coat-tails with such fervour that they split the seam from hem to neck, and we all enjoyed another very hearty laugh. We rested awhile, talking of various things, till I refused to wait longer, and climbed slowly up the road, the young men slightly resisting all the way. We came to a flight of stone steps, the upper half of which ran at right angles to the lower steps. This was crowded with Ius, and when I began to push my way up, I found it impossible. Looking down the steep road behind me I saw in the distance two soldiers who were evidently making signs to the people, but ceased when they saw I perceived them and tried to step out of sight, I called to them that I was being hindered, for I had with difficulty pushed my way up the lower half of the flight of steps. When on the point of raising my voice in another appeal, I heard an Iu close beside me say "Stick him a little to make him afraid!" I quietly drew out my pocket-knife, opened it, and offered the handle of it to the Iu who spoke, but he removed himself with haste!

I now felt sure that the soldiers had during the previous night sent word to them that, though they were not to injure me, they *must* prevent me from getting into their fortified town.

With an effort I reached the top step. There I heard one of them say "Push him off the edge of the road and down the precipice!" I stepped to the edge of the road and looked at them for a moment as though waiting for a push, then began climbing up the path again, finding next to no resistance was offered me now and that but a few of those on the steps followed me. The road ran up between huge rocks, where only one man could pass through at a time, and here three gray-haired elders awaited me. While I was answering their questions as to why and wherefore I had come, the hospital preacher rushed up with a white face, breathlessly beseeching me to turn back as his life was threatened if I entered the town. A few hundred feet away I saw the city gate, closed, and with a great many immense logs crossed and interlaced like a huge lattice work in front of it—all to keep out one foreigner!

Seeing that it was impossible to enter, or to go any further; that a man's life was threatened; that the afternoon was far spent; that I had had nothing to eat since early morning; and that the Iu elders had fully prepared for my reception with a vengeance., I turned to go back, and had taken but a few steps down the road when the Iu braves suddenly became overwhelmingly friendly. My arms were taken by two Ius, who had to walk before and behind my either side because of the narrow path, while others walked before and behind, telling me to be careful how I stepped! I was practically carried down the path. Never in my life, before or since, have I walked so lightly on my feet, or had people so solicitous of my every step!

On our way down, the men engaged a passing woman to mend my coat, for which I paid her ten cents. At dusk we reached the settlement from which we had started in the morning. The travellers' house was locked up, but the preacher persuaded an old couple to take me in, who were shortly afterwards scolded for it by some young braves. I had already retired into the only bed of rough paper in the house, but after the scolding, the old folks asked me to leave, saying they wished to have the bed! I told them not to fear, that I would go away in the morning; so they retired to find some other place of rest. When I left the hut early in the morning, I found about thirty Iu braves, fully armed, waiting to escort me to Lien Shan.

On the way down, a revolver which they spied in my pocket became an object of interest, and they wished to handle it, but that I refused.

When we arrived at Lien Shan, there only remained eight of the Ius with us, and but four of those entered the inn. These remarked to me in an undertone that if I wished to go to their town, they would take me up that night; only I was to wear their clothes, cut off my monstache, and they would give me their pass-word. In return for this small service, they would like that revolver! "No," I replied, "when I go up to your city I go by *invitation*, and in my own clothes."

I interviewed the official, complained that his soldiers had hindered me, and showed him my passport which promised me protection and help from officials in four provinces. This he pronounced most extraordinary, as the Viceroy had ordered him to permit no foreigners to go among the Ius. When I left him, I started out for another tribe of Ius with the preacher, but with no soldiers. We lived with the Ius in two of their settlements for some days, and then returned to our Mission station at Sam Kong.

TO RETURN TO THE TRIBES IN GENERAL.—For many years it was a moot question whether these tribes had any form of writing at all. Colquhoun was assured again and again in Yunnan by the Chinese that the “savages” had neither writing nor religion. One official, when told that Mr. Baber had discovered Lolo manuscript in Sz’chuen, smiled incredulously and said, “They *may* do that in Sz’chuen, but they cannot in Yunnan!” Nevertheless, in spite of the mandarin’s opinion, Colquhoun continued his quest for trustworthy evidence of the existence of such writing or books, but was unsuccessful till he reached Western Yunnan, where he saw at last a book belonging to the Pai or Shan tribe. The writing is said to resemble the early Chinese method, but the ability to decipher it is confined to their teachers, priests or medicine-men—or whatever their literati may be called. Missionaries of the Bible Christian Methodist Mission, who are now working among them, say that the Lolos, or No-Su, as they prefer to call them possess a considerable literature of their own.

The Chinese contemptuously assert that the aborigines have no religion, but the missionaries who have come in contact with them protest that it is not so. Almost all of them worship what is called the dog-god Poon Ku Kaw Shan—that is, the first man. Rev. G. W. Clarke, of the C. I. Mission, in his essay on the Miao-tsz, says “They have a confused idea of the Creator, whose name is Shiang Ko Lau. He lived in the world 3,800 years ago, and died,—where, is not known; they believe that he lives above. His father’s name was Keo Chiang Tai. He opened heaven and earth, and gave arable land and grain. The first men he made were dumb; then he gave them power to speak. He gave us all things to enjoy. There are no pictures, images, or temples to his honour. Though he is a real object of worship, they have no set times for adoring him. His favour is invoked at betrothals marriages, and when laying the foundations of a house or bridge. They offer in sacrifice to him pork, mutton, fowls and ducks; he pronounced beef, horse and dog flesh to be unclean, therefore this flesh is not offered. . . . Sicknes is believed to be caused by the visitation of evil spirits.” “They invoke Sheng Ko Lau when they perform a meritorious deed, but no deity’s mercy is sought when they sin. The soul is immortal and spiritual. The good ascend to heaven, and the wicked go to hell. They have a faint conception of a purgatorial deliverance from eternal punishment; also that souls enter unburied bodies. Misfortunes and calamities are caused by visitation of departed souls.” But some of these aboriginal tribes are widely separated, and what may be truly said of some, may

not be true of others, and missionaries differ in their accounts of customs and religious beliefs. But in this they agree, that at heart they are a simple lovable people, presenting a promising field for the missionary, in that they have not, like the Chinese, been saturated for centuries with Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism.

The Chinese say they are not a religious people, but in these latter days no article could be written on these non-Chinese tribes without some notice being given to the wonderful work that has been done among them in late years, not by man, but by the Holy Spirit. Only a small space can be given to it in a paper that is already too long, but if any wish to read and marvel over the things that are possible with God, and get encouragement therefrom, let them invest in a book by Samuel R. Clarke, published within the last few months. It is called, "Among the Tribes of Southwest China."

But let us first glance shortly at the Mission work that was done among them in earlier years. Full records of this are hard to gather up, as probably every Mission working among the Chinese in the vicinity of these people came more or less in contact with them, and undoubtedly taught them as they had opportunity and time. For some tens of years the Roman Catholics have tried to reach them, but with small success. In Yunnan and Kweichow the China Inland and Bible Christian Missions have made continuous efforts to establish work among the numerous surrounding tribes, but their main attention had to be given to the Chinese work, and no missionary had been set apart specially for work among the non-Chinese people. A little work had been done among the Lolos, but an immense field, and a very promising one, awaits some Society among those brave, sturdy Highlanders. At Lienchow the American Presbyterian Mission for years has done what work they could among the Iu tribes. A chapel was opened in one settlement, with a preacher who could speak Chinese and Iu; some of the Iu women were persuaded to come and stay at the Mission Station for a season, working for one of the ladies while she taught them the Gospel, and translated the Lord's Prayer and so forth into their language for them. But that hindering official foot again inserted itself,—or rather, it tried to *close* the open door!—and the missionaries found they must confine their Iu work to getting boys and young men into their school for study, then sending them out to teach their people.

In Hainan Island the Miao-Loi have had their share of attention from the missionaries, and outstations have been established among them.

But the most successful evangelistic work among these aboriginal tribes at present is that among the Miao in Kweichow and North Yunnan, by the China Inland and Bible Christian Mission, referred to in a previous paragraph. In 1896 definite efforts were made to reach and evangelize these people, and S. R. Clarke, (C. I. M.) was asked to give himself entirely to work among them, learn their language, and reduce it to writing. In time a few other workers joined him, but from 1896 till 1905 the story is one of difficulties and hardships, and troubles with robbers, though the sunshine glinted through the clouds at times. But in 1905 that wonderful working of the Holy Spirit was apparent among them. Samuel R. Clarke in his book, says "One very admirable and encouraging characteristic of these Miao Christians is that, when they believe the Gospel for themselves they are eager and unwearied in teaching it to others. The movement among them has spread, not so much in consequence of the travelling and preaching of the missionaries, as by the zeal and persistent testimony of these simple believers."

To sum up the work there, let me quote Marshall Broomhall in the Preface he has written to the book:—

"It is a remarkable fact that in the provinces of Kweichow and Yunnan, where work has been notoriously barren and unfruitful, this great work of grace should have broken out among the non-Chinese tribes. Communities which a few years ago were ignorant, degraded, and immoral, are now pure and Christian. Scores of villages have become wholly Christian, and hundreds of other villages are nominally Christian. One worker has estimated that, as the result of the work of the last seven or eight years, there are now some 50,000 of these people at least nominally Christian. The area over which the work extends is many thousands of square miles, and the country is mountainous, some of the villages being situated about 8000 feet above sea-level.

In An-Shuen Foo district, about 150 miles from north to south, 1480 aborigines were baptized in 1906, more than 500 in 1907, 800 during 1908, 356 during 1909, and 260 during 1910. At the close of 1910 the total number of Communicants in this district, not to speak of adherents, was 3500."

An equally successful work has sprung up at Chao Tong, in North Yunnan, under the Bible Christian Mission, and a third to the north of Yunnan Foo, where Dr. Nicholls, of the C.I.M., is in charge. Hospital and medical work is also being begun among them—but what is one hospital among so many people, or one dozen workers among so many millions? In Yunnan Province

alone the aborigines are estimated as 7,000,000 and in Kwong Sai, 5,000,000. Truly, not only from the Chinese people, but from the mountain-tops of China's four Southwestern provinces comes a strong Macedonian cry to the Christian world, for help, for enlightenment, for the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ.

E. C. MACHLE, M.D.

